



SENATOR RUNNER'S WEEK IN REVIEW

A WEEKLY REVIEW THAT WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED AND UP-TO-DATE



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Waste-Watch: Exposing Government Waste

30,000 State Vehicles Are "Missing"

Every business that is successful makes inventory a vital aspect of their business plan – specifically what inventory they need versus what inventory they have.

You would think that the State of California, for all its shortfalls, would be able to keep an accurate inventory of its vast belongings – from property to vehicles. But you would be wrong.

However, after Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected into office, he appointed former San Bernardino County Supervisor Fred Aguiar to head up the State and Consumer Services Agency to focus on maximizing resources, improve efficiency and reduce government spending. They began to aggressively inventory state resources – from furniture to vehicles to property. When Aguiar began his review, he discovered the situation "was so bad".

Through this aggressive effort, it was revealed that while the number of state-owned vehicles has swelled to 70,000, the state at this point has been able to account for only 40,000 of those vehicles. In fact, it was discovered that one government agency purchased \$4 million worth of automobiles but there was no record of where it bought them.

Aguiar is continuing his investigation and has stated that he plans on developing a computerized system that will allow the state to track the vehicles it owns at any given time and provide detailed information about each vehicle. According to a recent state audit, the savings could be substantial.

Fully Funded, Non-Existent Museum

Generally, most of us do not pay upfront for services that have yet to be completed. By doing so, we avoid the possibility of someone leaving us empty handed while someone skips town with our money. Occasionally though, we do have to pay for a job ahead of time. But, then we tend keep a close watch on the job's progress to ensure we get exactly what we paid for. Most of us would assume that our government would follow the same rules in spending our taxpayer dollars.

News of the Week

[Shuttle Discovery Lands Safely at Edwards AFB](#)

[Governor's Redistricting Initiative Back on Ballot](#)

[Victorville Facility will be Home to World's Largest Solar Plant](#)

[Workers' Comp Overhaul Is Reported
to Start Taking Positive Turn for Businesses](#)

[Hesperia Paves Way for Flood Preparedness](#)

[Santa Paula Airport Celebrates 75th Anniversary](#)

[Where Are the Cars That the State Owns?](#)

[Santa Clarita Valley Beats County Average
in Hotel Occupancy Rates](#)

Unfortunately, that would be assuming too much.

Take, for example, a recent state audit of the Department of Parks and Recreation. In March 2002, the Colour Me Freedom Foundation was awarded \$250,000 to construct a museum dedicated to civil rights leaders Cesar Chavez and Martin Luther King, Jr. The only problem? The money was never used for its intended purpose, and the funds are still missing.

According to the audit, this rumored museum is nothing more than a portable classroom "*storing items belonging to the school.*"

So how did this occur? The department failed to provide oversight, and its oversight policy held no one accountable when things failed. First, the department handed out 90% of the grant award, or \$221,625, in advance payment to the foundation responsible for building the museum, believing that it would spend the money on the project. But, after dispersing the money, *nobody* ever asked for a status report to make sure that the funds were used appropriately or that a museum was actually being built.

Had the department used common sense principles, officials would have found that the "*the public did not have access to the site because of the school at which the museum is located.*" Further, they would have learned that the site lacked electricity, which should have aroused suspicions immediately. As a result of this mismanagement, taxpayers are now paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for a storage shed.

Unfortunately, waste, fraud, and abuse in government continue to rage day in and day out. This time, Californians are paying for services they never received. Some in California say we need to raise taxes. What we need to do is reform our state government and hold the managers of taxpayer dollars just as accountable as they would be anywhere else. Otherwise, taxpayers will only be shelling out more money that will be wasted on more non-existent projects.

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